

# Greg Freeman's Garden Chronicle



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**On previous page...This decades-old pink *Lagerstoemia indica* (crepe myrtle), on the property of my neighbor, Miss L. Quarles, is the most beautiful specimen I have ever seen.**

Since the last *Garden Chronicle*, I have taken on responsibilities not imagined a year or more ago. On October 15, 2022, I was installed as president of the Georgia Daffodil Society. My roles in the forthcoming 2023 American Daffodil Society National Show in Atlanta already included chairing the Education Division and co-chairing publicity. I have since been asked to judge in horticulture, a most distinguished honor. And I am now local photography show chair for the ADS National Daffodil Photography Show. As I assume these roles, I only hope that I live up to the expectations of all who are depending on me.

Outside of gardening and show planning, I have been writing songs. Doors have opened for me to pitch to one previously unreachable record company executive and producer in Nashville, as well as several superstar country music artists. I pray my latest songs gain traction. My song on the Collingsworth Family's Gaither Music release, *Just Sing!* (2021), is not only attracting international attention, but the album on which it was included was nominated for a Dove Award this year from the Gospel Music Association. Awards and nominations are not everything, but they certainly provide credence for a songwriter and music publisher like myself.

As many of you know, writing (mostly nonfiction but more fiction of late), in addition to songwriting and recording music, has been a huge part of what I do. Among my topics of choice, the ones that have scored me the most publishing opportunities are the American South, the Mediterranean region, gardening, horses, music, film and television (with emphasis on race, class and masculinity studies), the visual arts and architecture. I am also captivated by the 1920s and the Great Depression.

Perhaps evidence of my own insecurities, I derive satisfaction in knowing that some of my published work has appeared alongside the work of tenured professors and other scholars, as I do not have a college degree. I am pleased that, when the occasion calls for it, my writing can garner the attention of academics.

A call for papers was announced a few months ago for The Turbulent Twenties: A Centennial Exploration of America in a Changing World, a conference to be held at California State University, Bakersfield on November 4. For this event, I submitted an abstract for a proposed paper, titled *Female Blues Singers of the 1920s: Trailblazers and Hell-raisers*, through which I would expound on groundbreaking, hard-living blues singers Mamie Smith, Ida Cox, Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith. To my disappointment, Dr. Miriam Raub Vivian, Director of the Public History Institute and Chair of History at CSU, Bakersfield, replied, "I was very much looking forward to hearing your presentation, but the response to our Call for Papers was uncharacteristically anemic; in essence, we simply don't have enough presentations to host a viable conference." My heart sank.

While I will not be flying to California anytime soon to discuss blues divas, I was pleasantly surprised to receive an invitation this past summer to speak on April 18, 2023 at the Garden Club of Georgia Convention at Stone Mountain's Atlanta Evergreen Lakeside Resort. My 2021 talk at the Spalding Garden Club led to this invitation, and I have been asked to give a repeat presentation of *Georgia on My Mind: Twelve Essential Daffodils for Georgia Gardens*.

Whether talking about blues singers, daffodils or otherwise, I enjoy giving lectures...not because they stroke my ego, but because they allow me to fellowship with others who share my passions. As you read this latest edition of my *Garden Chronicle*, permit me to say thank you for your time and attentive reading. I hope our common bond brings us together at some point in 2023. You bring your notes. I will bring mine. And we will learn from each other. I pray the Lord's blessings on you all. Happy Gardening!

**Greg Freeman, Publisher**

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## Stephen J. Vinisky (1953-2022)

In 2004, when I first became seriously involved in exhibiting and hybridizing daffodils, I joined the American Daffodil Society and bought my first serious, show quality bulbs from John Pearson's Hofflands Daffodils of England. My next step was to join my nearest daffodil club, the Georgia Daffodil Society, and my first GDS meeting was on the front porch of Sara Van Beck's Midtown Atlanta home that October. Captain John Lipscomb, GDS president at the time, mentioned that new members would receive a free show bulb, courtesy of Steve Vinisky's Cherry Creek Daffodils. In addition to

my cultivar choice, 'Killearnan', I received a Cherry Creek catalogue, which provided much inspiration. The following year, I placed my first order for bulbs from Steve, and the rest is history.

From Steve, who lived in Sherwood, Oregon, just outside Portland, I would buy many of my winning daffodils, and through the years he would share species, seedlings and newly registered cultivars of his own breeding for me to try out, as well as exciting cultivars outside my spending range from other hybridists. As we discussed plants in general, Steve regaled me with stories – many of them second-hand, of course – about internationally-renowned daffodil breeders Guy Wilson, Alec Gray, Lionel Richardson, Grant Mitsch, Brian Duncan, John Lea and Sir Frank Harrison, and I was further intrigued with his plant-trading experiences with Mrs. Kathleen N. "Kath" Dryden VMH, who was globally-known in Alpine garden circles.

We would talk for hours at a time about everything from the famous irises (and daffodils) from Ben R. Hager and Sidney Dubose, of Melrose Gardens fame, to former British spy Sir Peter Smithers, author of *Adventures of a Gardener* (London: Harvill Press, 1995) and a purported inspiration for Ian Fleming's James Bond character.

Before long, Steve was selling me non-daffodil plants and sharing exciting creations from his breeding program. In a previous article for *Greg Freeman's Garden Chronicle*, I recounted his sharing with me a stunning silver leaf *Cyclamen hederifolium* (which resulted



Be sure to check out [www.GregFreeman.garden](http://www.GregFreeman.garden) for original video content and other helpful information.



Greg Freeman

***Cyclamen hederifolium* x 'Silver Leaf' resulted from a cross between silver leaf specimens from Sidney DuBose (Stockton, California, USA) and Kath Dryden (Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire, England, United Kingdom).**

from a cross between silver leaf specimens he received from DuBose and Dryden). To my disappointment, the plant survived in my garden for only half a decade or so, but I still have *Primula acaulis* ‘Blueberry Swirl’, a gorgeous blue double primrose of which Steve was particularly proud to be the breeder. From his fellow Sherwood nurseryman Richard “Red” Cavender, who is widely regarded for his rhododendrons, Steve even secured me a young specimen of *Poncirus trifoliata* ‘Flying Dragon’, which is probably the most eye-catching small tree in my garden. Another plant of note is Hager’s delightful little daylily, *Hemerocallis* ‘Penny’s Worth’, which has been thriving in my garden since 2009.

Beyond being Steve Vinisky’s customer, I received encouragement and mentorship from him. I think he saw me as a protégé of sorts, and went out of his way to help me achieve great results as a hybridist. He was opinionated, funny and sometimes crass. He had his fans and a few detractors, I suppose, but he believed in my potential and treated me well, and we got along swimmingly. He predicted that I would be one to watch in upcoming years, and he encouraged me to become an American Daffodil Society accredited judge to expand my knowledge and improve my objectivity, if nothing else. I took much of his advice through the years, although we respectfully disagreed on some points.

I think it is also important to mention that the Northwestern United States and American South are culturally, politically and often ideologically different, and it was good



Greg Freeman

***Primula acaulis* ‘Blueberry Swirl’, a stunning double blue primrose from Steve Vinisky’s breeding program**



Tom Stettner

**This Bozievich Ribbon-winning collection from the 2022 Georgia Daffodil Society Show contains Steve Vinisky’s homebred ‘Red Storm’ (2<sup>nd</sup> row, far left) and the Freeman seedling, GSF-10B-17-01 (2<sup>nd</sup> row, far right), a cross between ‘Red Storm’ and ‘Bailey’. Four of the twelve cultivars were purchased from Cherry Creek Daffodils.**

for both of us to talk about things besides daffodils and gardening. An exchange of ideas always brings greater understanding between parties whose upbringings and views are dissimilar. That said, our respect for each other only deepened, and we came to realize we were not as different as we had once thought.

During the past few years, we talked less. Life had taken us both in different directions. Steve was grieving the loss of his wife, Heather, during the time I was dealing with the loss of my mother. The last time we talked was back in the spring, at which time I phoned him to share the news of my Bozievich Ribbon-winning collection in Atlanta. The collection contained his intensely-colored 'Red Storm' and my seedling, GSF-10B-17-01 (a cross between 'Red Storm' x 'Bailey'), the ADS Rose Ribbon winner (best seedling in the show). Four of the twelve cultivars in the collection, namely 'Red Storm', 'Splatter', 'Mesa Verde' and 'Sammy Girl', had all been acquired from Cherry Creek. He was pleased with my success, and offered his sincere congratulations. Little did I know that conversation would be our final one.

Today, I remain enthusiastic about gardening and plant breeding, but I must admit that I have yet to befriend another seasoned gardener and hybridist who shares my level of interest or is willing



Greg Freeman

**“Pictured is one of my all-time favorite daffodils, 'Crackington'. With my first order of bulbs, Steve Vinisky sent me two gratis bulbs. Dr. John Beck was smitten with one of my 'Crackington' blooms at the Atlanta show in 2009 when he came south to judge. Though I was green as a meadow, I was surprised to learn that, when my flower came up missing from the table on which it had been judged in its class, Dr. Beck had taken it to the main table for Best in Show consideration. These can be darn near perfect, and my very first daffodil cross was a stunning double seedling from 'Stoke Charity' x 'Crackington', which has won ribbons for me” (Freeman, Facebook post excerpt, 2022).**

to discuss ideas and impart a depth of wisdom the way Steve Vinisky did. He was that kind of friend, and his absence makes me even more grateful for the lessons I learned.

Freeman, Greg. Untitled post. *Facebook*, 12 October 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/greg.freeman.1974>, Accessed 31 December 2022



## A Meal Fit for a Maharaja...or Perhaps a Sultan

In my area, there is a sizable Hispanic population, and some of the Mexican-Americans are proprietors, or more often employees, of the many Mexican restaurants that dot the Upstate South Carolina landscape. These popular establishments cater to the Americanized version of Mexican food. Neither the average person on the street nor I have a clue about authentic, everyday Mexican cuisine. The same could be said of other ethnic foods, especially Japanese, Chinese and Italian. After all, even the immigrant-owned/influenced versions of these restaurants must also adapt to American tastes, hence the ubiquitous hibachi grills, Chinese menus offering fried chicken dripping in sauce and so-called Italian bills of fare that list the obligatory chicken parmigiana, veal Marsala and shrimp Alfredo. While I enjoy and frequently patronize the restaurants offering all of these Americanized ethnic foods, I do so knowing that much of what I consume would never

be found in the country of its supposed origins. Indian food has evolved in the United States, too, but I have visited restaurants where authentic Indian dishes are served. Unfortunately, the nearest such eatery is an hour away, and my favorite is over four hours away!

When I crave Indian food, I typically find myself buying one of those Street Kitchen kits from my local grocer, but even the selection of those, which includes butter chicken or chicken tikka masala, are of the British-influenced ilk. After all, many people forget that India was once the British Empire's jewel in the crown, and London, as a result, has for many years comprised, in part, a large ethnic Indian population. Some of the finest Indian restaurants in the world are found not only in New Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore, but in London. Given that my favorite Indian restaurant, Bombay Palace, is a long drive away in Knoxville, a trip to London when my craving strikes is even more prohibitive.

I have resorted to preparing Indian-influenced food in my own kitchen, incorporating the ingredients easily accessible to me, as I seek to satisfy my own palate. Anglo-Indian food often contains less spices than dishes prepared on the subcontinent due to longstanding American tastes, which are said to be changing, by the way. I employ less spices simply because some of them are difficult to obtain.

In August 2022, I experimented with chicken thighs, seasoning them with an array of spices before placing them on a sheet pan with vegetables and baking to perfection. While they cooked, I dug out the chickpea (garbanzo bean) flour and prepared some vegetable pakoras. The resulting meal prompted me to announce to my social media friends on Facebook:

**Some of my endeavors in the kitchen result in less-than-desirable concoctions I can only wish were forgettable. And there ARE a few things I do very well. That said, the words I'm about to use were chosen very carefully, and this is a statement I have never made in my life: I JUST COOKED ONE OF THE MOST AMAZING MEALS I HAVE EVER HAD (Freeman, Facebook post, 2022).**



Greg Freeman

### **Greg Freeman's Indian-influenced Sheet Pan Chicken**

**It might not be pretty to look at, but this sheet pan meal was outstanding.**

I was reluctant to brag on my cooking, and it is doubtful that I could repeat the dish exactly, but it was indeed one of the best meals I have ever had. Like the Americanized versions of Mexican, Japanese, Chinese and Italian food offered at restaurants in my area, my dish was hardly authentic, as far as Indian cuisine is concerned, but I declare it was fit for a maharaja or perhaps a sultan, whichever fits. Whether one should call it Anglo-Indian, or simply Indian-influenced, or perhaps even Mediterranean (due to similar flavors and ingredients found in both Middle Eastern/Turkish/North African cooking and the Mughal-influenced dishes of India), is debatable, but for all intents and purposes, I will title it Greg Freeman's Indian-influenced Sheet Pan Chicken. The best part about the preparation was its simplicity. Once I had chopped the vegetables, the rest was a cinch. Readers will be surprised to learn that peeled and chopped bite-size Granny Smith apple pieces were even incorporated, adding unique texture and contributing to the complexity of flavor. No doubt, one could use sweet potato instead for a different texture and less tartness.

## **Greg Freeman's Indian-influenced Sheet Pan Chicken**

### **Ingredients**

- 6 boneless chicken thighs
- 1 large onion, cut in quarters
- 3-4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 large carrot, cut in ½" pieces
- 2-3 chili peppers, seeds removed, chopped
- 1 ½ cup broccoli florets
- 1 small Granny Smith apple, peeled, chopped in ½" pieces
- 1 large unpeeled potato, washed and cut in ½" pieces

### **Seasoning Mixture**

- 1 tbsp. salt
- 1 tsp. black pepper
- 1 tsp. cayenne powder
- 1 tbsp. garlic powder
- 1 tsp. smoked paprika
- 1 tsp. coriander
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- ½ tsp. nutmeg

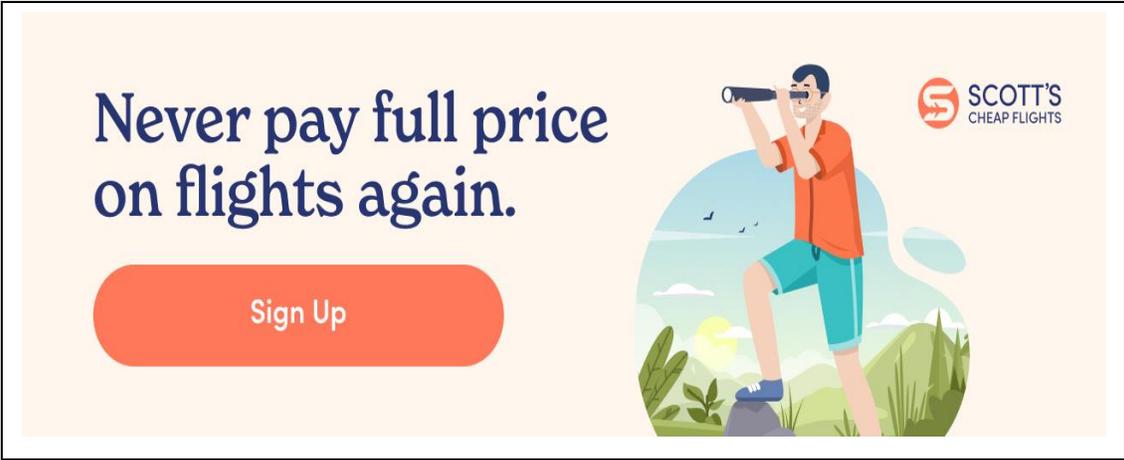
### **Directions**

Preheat oven to 350° Fahrenheit. Coat sheet pan with tablespoon of vegetable or canola oil. Coat chicken and vegetables in combined seasonings. Place on sheet pan and bake 40-45 minutes. Fat from chicken will render and all the flavors will meld together. Upon serving, top with freshly-minced chili pepper, garlic slices and finely-chopped scallions (green onions). Serve with rice or vegetable pakoras and naan.

## From a Gardener's Standpoint

The great thing about Indian cuisine is that many of the ingredients, whether they be vegetables or the herbs used to enhance the dishes, are easily grown. A previous *Garden Chronicle* addressed the topic of growing garlic. Peppers are easy and a lot of fun to grow. As for potatoes, carrots and broccoli, there are rules of thumb, but gardeners can easily overcome their learning curves and enjoy their harvests in a variety of ways. Try this chicken dish in 2023. More importantly, challenge yourself to plant some vegetables you have never grown before, and incorporate them into unique creations of your own. You will not be disappointed, and you, too, are bound to come up with a meal fit for a maharaja, or a sultan, that you can call your own.

Freeman, Greg. Untitled post. *Facebook*, 23 July 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/greg.freeman.1974>, Accessed 31 December 2022.



Never pay full price  
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SCOTT'S  
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The advertisement features a man in an orange shirt and blue shorts looking through a telescope against a background of a landscape with a sun, clouds, and birds. The Scott's Cheap Flights logo is in the top right corner, and a red rounded rectangular button with the text 'Sign Up' is positioned below the headline.



WHEN DAD AND I WENT  
**FISHIN'**  
buy it or stream it and take the kids fishing!

Greg Freeman

The book cover features a photograph of a man in a blue shirt on the left. The title and author's name are prominently displayed on a dark blue background.

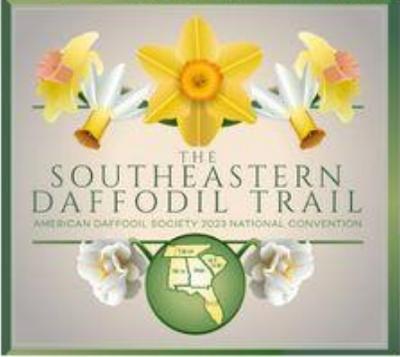
**Mark your calendar for the  
2023 American Daffodil Society National Show**



**Crowne Plaza® Atlanta Perimeter at Ravinia  
4355 Ashford Dunwoody Road, Atlanta, Georgia 30346**

**March 10-11, 2023**  
**Admission to show is free! Hotel parking fees apply.**

**The 2023 American Daffodil Society National Show, a Standard Flower Show, in cooperation with National Garden Clubs and The Garden Club of Georgia, will include divisions in Horticulture, Design and Education.**



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## **Keukenhof Mural to Serve as Backdrop for American Daffodil Society’s National Show in Atlanta**

Located in Lisse, the Netherlands, in the province of South Holland, Keukenhof comprises some 79 acres, and is one of the most spectacular gardens in the world. While the Dutch are understandably devoted to this beautiful garden – which is situated 17.2 miles from the bulb growers’ marketplace and tulip mania epicenter, Haarlem, and 21.5 miles from the capital city, Amsterdam – Keukenhof is regarded as the “Garden of Europe,” attracting visitors from every corner of the Continent and beyond.

## The Perfect Photograph

A must-see stop on any European tour that includes even limited stops in the Netherlands, Keukenhof has awed tourists and inspired travel writers for many years. The publishers of the travel guide, *Gardens of the World*, state, “Keukenhof was an English style garden until 1949, when commercial bulb growers spotted its potential as a showcase for their products. Upon opening in 1950, it became more than a business venture, drawing in 236,000 people who came to admire its transient beauties. By 2019, 1.4 million visitors were jostling for the perfect photograph. And it’s clear what all the fuss is about – this garden is pure precision” (DK Eyewitness, 2022).

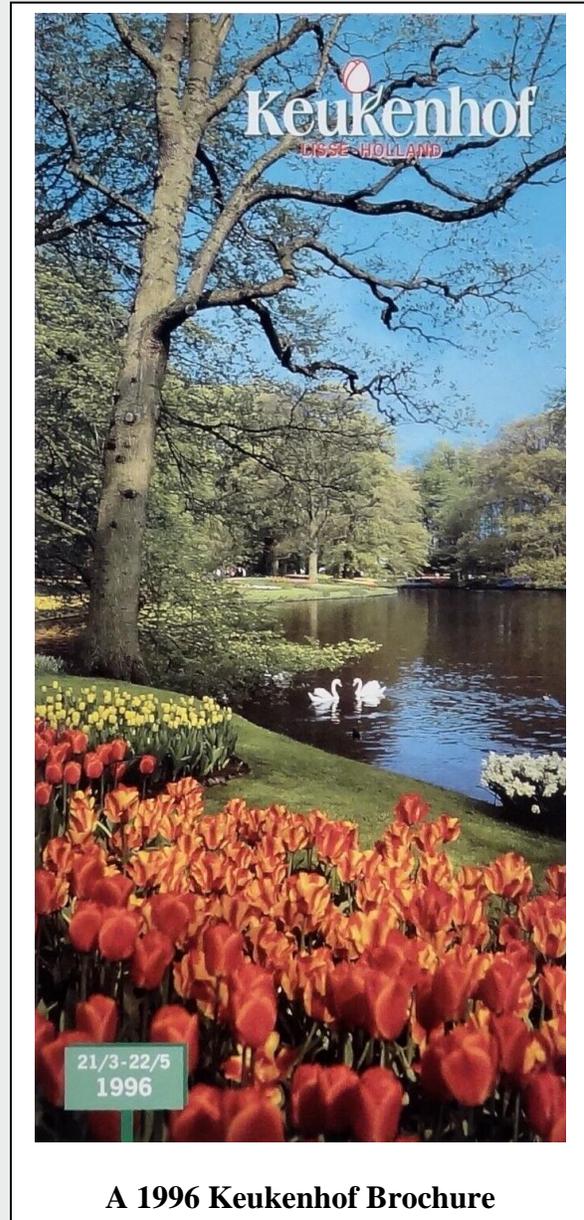
One such perfect photograph was taken in 1999, and from that image Mrs. Deen Day Sanders (b. 1933), a suburban Atlantan and past president of both the Garden Club of Georgia and National Garden Clubs, Inc., commissioned artist Lynwood Hall (b. 1953) to paint a mural from the image.

## The Perfect Painting

Sanders is the widow of hotelier Cecil B. Day Sr. (1934-1978), who founded the Days Inn hotel chain. Noted for her volunteerism and financial support of worthy causes, Sanders has consistently backed a wide range of garden-related activities and projects, as well as educational and Christian causes. Her donation of the Lynwood Hall mural and further support of the

2023 American Daffodil Society National Show are typical of her generous philanthropic efforts.

Hall’s *Daffodils of Keukenhof* is comprised of multiple panels and measures a total of twenty-eight feet in width and twelve feet in height. The mural will serve as the backdrop for the Horticulture Division of the 2023 ADS National Show, to be held on March 10 at the Crowne Plaza® Atlanta Perimeter at Ravinia. Furthermore, all of the ADS trophies will be on hand, and the mural will serve as the perfect background for the various trophy winners to use for their celebratory photographs.



**A 1996 Keukenhof Brochure**

The mural made its debut at the 2009 National Garden Clubs Convention in Houston, and has since been safely tucked away in temperature-controlled storage. Its appearance in Atlanta will mark only the second time the painting has been viewed by the public.



**Lynwood Hall (b. 1953), *Daffodils of Keukenhof* (early 2000s), acrylic on lauan board**

**Custom benches, as seen in the image, were also made to accompany the painting at the 2009 National Garden Clubs Convention in Houston.**

Lynwood Hall's body of work is particularly known for its landscapes and garden images. Crediting Claude Monet (1840-1926) as his greatest influence, Hall revealed in an interview with Adelia Ladson that he "has traveled to Monet's home in Giverny, France nine times to study the gardens and photograph and sketch them" (2007). Hall, himself a resident of Moultrie, Georgia and University of Georgia alumnus, has served on the Board of Directors of Athens' State Botanical Garden of Georgia, a 313-acre preserve established in 1968 by UGA. Multiple commissions of his work have been enjoyed by everyone from the Garden Club of Georgia to National Garden Clubs. Needless to say, Deen Day Sanders has been his most ardent patron.

In addition to the dizzying array of daffodils, visitors to the 2023 ADS National Show will be able to peruse the stunning design, educational and youth exhibits, as well as the ADS National Daffodil Photography Show. An opportunity to view this monumental work by Lynwood Hall is an added bonus indeed.

Ladson, Adelia. "Artist paints his experiences." *The Moultrie Observer*. 30 May 2007. Accessed 31 December 2022: [https://www.moultrieobserver.com/archives/artist-paints-his-experiences/article\\_8efea49a-13ac-5d37-bbd5-9266b217d517.html](https://www.moultrieobserver.com/archives/artist-paints-his-experiences/article_8efea49a-13ac-5d37-bbd5-9266b217d517.html)

DK Eyewitness. *Gardens of the World*. New York: Dorling Kindersley Publishing, 2022.

## The Big Freeze of 2022

Just prior to Christmas this year, an Arctic cold front swept across the United States, even affecting otherwise balmy locales in Florida, with temperatures dropping dramatically in eighteen hours on December 23.

That evening, my extended family and I gathered for our Christmas get-together at the residence of my brother and sister-in-law, by which point the temperatures were in the teens. The next couple of days failed to warm up above the twenties, and nightly lows were around five degrees Fahrenheit. Here in my corner of the American South, where our winters are usually punctuated by a bout or two of freezing rain, a light snowfall here and there and only an occasional few nights in the twenties, the Arctic Blast of 2022 seemed especially brutal. Forty- to fifty-five mile-per-hour wind gusts did not help. When one is focused on staying warm and avoiding the outside as much as possible, the fate of one's outside plants seems much less important.

After the big chill had waned, and normal temperatures began to return, I assessed the damage in the garden. Autumn/early winter-blooming paperwhite tazetta daffodils, which I had obtained from the Georgia Daffodil Society, courtesy of Sara Van Beck's Heirloom Tazettas, had been planted in pots, and were in flower at the time of the Arctic Blast. In an average winter, the



Greg Freeman

**This circa 1830s paperwhite tazetta daffodil was blooming beautifully when this photograph was taken on December 15. After December 23, both the flowers and foliage were reduced to mulching material. Sara Van Beck had observed this historic cultivar, whose official name is now dubious, in South Georgia and North Florida gardens, even adding that some Tallahassee folks called this one "Snowflake" in the 1940s.**

flowers might have fared well, but such was not the case during this big freeze. The flower stems *and* foliage of the paperwhite daffodils in containers, as well as the foliage of several hardier tazettas that had emerged above ground, were all zapped. I have yet to dig down and assess the condition of the actual bulbs, knowing that I am bound to find them in dismal condition. My autumn-blooming, green-cupped daffodil seedlings (descendants of the all-green, fall-blooming *Narcissus viridiflorus*) that I received years ago from Dr. Harold Koopowitz of California are all planted in the ground. Their fate was a bit different. The flower stems were all decimated, but the foliage appeared mostly unaffected. Most interesting was my own daffodil seedling, GSF-10A-17-01 ('Katrina Rea' x Koopowitz seedling HK2-08, one of the aforementioned fall bloomers). Its foliage and emerging buds were not only making an appearance at the time of the freeze, they survived the cold unscathed, a positive sign, of course, from a hybridist's vantage point. This, by the way, is the daffodil that took the prestigious Propagation Award at the 2022 Atlanta Botanical Garden Flower Show, and had been a strong contender for Gold Ribbon (Best in Show) at the 2019 Georgia Daffodil Society Show.

Other observations in the garden include the cold's effect on *Lonicera fragrantissima*, my deliciously-scented honeysuckle shrub, which had surprisingly retained much of its foliage from the summer. After the extreme cold, its leaves dropped almost overnight. Interestingly, its buds, which typically signal spring is almost here, were mostly unaffected and have since begun opening and filling the air with their sweet fragrance.

Garden herbs, namely *Salvia rosmarinus* 'Arp' (Rosemary 'Arp'), *Salvia officinalis* (garden sage) and *Origanum vulgare* subsp. *hirtum* (oregano) were all severely nipped

by the cold. I had never seen rosemary turn brown until this weather event, and I was quite pleased that I had gone through the laborious effort to collect, dry, grind up and store leaves of sage and oregano just a week or two earlier. Otherwise, I would not have any from my own garden to use in the kitchen this winter and in the spring to come.

Perhaps most shocking of all was the toll the extreme cold took on some plants in the house. Readers of my *Garden Chronicle* are, by now, familiar with my terrarium, *Mediterranea*, which



Greg Freeman

**After the Arctic Blast of 2022, I was grateful that I had gone through the trouble to collect, dry and grind leaves of oregano and sage just a few weeks earlier. What's Thanksgiving dressing without homegrown garden sage? And I can't imagine a homemade pasta sauce without oregano to finish it off.**

is housed in a room I have converted into a creative space that I call The Nook. While *Mediterranea* hardly replicates the climate of Southern Europe or North Africa *exactly*, it is designed to ensure drainage, my waterings are limited and I have strategically placed growing lamps above, which are timed to give light and warmth each day. If it is a sunny day, the light also filters through the window in the afternoon and evening. The Nook, meanwhile, is the perfect place for songwriting, pecking away at the laptop on articles, piddling



Greg Freeman

**The Nook, as I call my creative space, has evolved since this photograph was taken. The furnishings and color scheme – ‘Shades of Sage’, as I like to say – remain the same, but my growing collection of antique Mediterranean region post cards now adorn the wall on the left along with some other interesting artworks, as well as some artwork of my own. I still cherish the chair in the corner, as it is my design concept. Featuring three different fabrics, it is one of the last personal projects my late father and I worked on together in his upholstery shop. *Mediterranea*, the large terrarium, which is sparsely planted in this image, is now filled with an array of Mediterranean area perennials, bulbs and even an olive tree. Timer-controlled growing lights are now fashioned above, replacing the hood, to reduce humidity and provide stronger light and more warmth. That said, the temperature dropped low enough in this room that *Ocimum basilicum* ‘Fino Verde’, my fine-leaved basil, met its demise. Thankfully, I have more seeds!**

with my paintings and sculptures, having ZOOM meetings, recording video promos for my music and websites and doing outside interviews. The Nook is basically an old laundry/utility room adjacent to a built-in carport-cum-great room, and both are part of my home, but have no ductwork and remain closed off from the rest of the house where there is heating and cooling. Therefore, in the heat of the summer, The Nook is miserably hot, and in the winter it is chilly.

Needless to say, during the Arctic Blast, it was frigid enough that my tender basil plants, namely some seed-grown specimens of the diminutive ‘Fino Verde’ selection, were wiped out. Some miniature species daffodils (one of which is now in bud!), an olive tree, a clump of *Ajuga reptans* and *Sedum acre* were growing in *Mediterranea* alongside the basil plants, but they fared well. I

must not complain, though, as the basil, a vulnerable annual, would have naturally perished outside in the garden a month or more ago. At least I had been able to make a tasty pesto spread from some of the tender leaves a few weeks back.

If there is something to be learned from a gardener's angle regarding the Big Freeze of 2022, it is that native plants outperform the Asian imports under such circumstances. The 'Blanche Sandman' selection of my native honeysuckle, *Lonicera sempervirens*, the subject of an article I wrote a few years ago for the American Horticultural Society's magazine, *The American Gardener*, as well as my blueberry bush, held up well, emerging growth and all, proving why natives have stood the test of time. While I will continue to grow both native and non-native plants, it is reassuring to know that some tried and true favorites can capably withstand what nature can throw at them. If only I could say the same for myself.

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Cheryl Murphy

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Visitors by appointment only.

*"I'm thrilled that my neighbor, Cheryl Murphy, has started a small specialty nursery, offering native plants ranging from azaleas to beautiful pollinator-attracting wildflowers. I've since added *Echinacea pallida* to my coneflower collection! If you're in the Oconee County, South Carolina area, check out her quality selection." – Greg Freeman*

## Photograph: *Hiding in Plain Sight*



Greg Freeman (b. 1974), *Hiding in Plain Sight*, 2022, Digital Photograph.

Among the joys of gardening are the observations one can make. After all, a garden is more than the sum of our seed-sowing efforts or hours spent pruning, weeding, fertilizing and gathering. I immensely enjoy seeing various creatures, including rabbits, birds and the occasional harmless snake, pay a visit to my garden. And I especially love all sorts of spiders and insects, including butterflies, night-flying moths and various bees and wasps who buzz or flutter about my garden collecting pollen. In our quests to produce flowers and gather produce, we can easily overlook our four-, six- and eight-legged friends, as well as the sheer variety of feathered ones. A mockingbird nests in my garden every year, and she loudly protests when I am present, unaware that she is living rent-free on my turf, not hers. She has swooped down a time or two, warning me, when I'm too near her nest. I generally oblige and move onto another corner of the garden. Even in late fall and on those first warmer days leading up to spring, it is not unusual to encounter one of our native lizards finding a sunny spot, usually on one of my many stones, to soak in some sunrays. The above photograph was taken on September 20, 2022. The large, heart-shaped leaves adorn the cascading branches of my *Cercis canadensis* 'Lavender Twist' (US PP10,328), aka weeping redbud, creating a beautiful trailing effect like that of a bridal gown's train. Sunning himself on one of the sturdy leaves is one of our native lizards, the handsome *Anolis carolinensis* (Carolina Anole). Possessing the ability to change colors, from brown to green, he has opted to turn green. Can you spot him? He is elusive, yet obvious!

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In addition to being an avid gardener and daffodil hybridist, judge and exhibitor, Greg Freeman is an author, editor, recording artist, songwriter, amateur visual artist and life-long horse lover. His nonfiction writing on a number of subjects has appeared in magazines, encyclopedias and books of academic and scholarly interest, as well as [Southern Edition](#), Freeman's digital publication devoted to the American South. Published academic/encyclopedic contributions by Freeman include a chapter in Nadine Farghaly's edited volume, *Gender and the Modern Sherlock Holmes: Essays on Film and Television Adaptations Since 2009* (2015), as well as multiple entries in: *Race in American Film: Voices and Visions That Shaped a Nation* (2017), edited by Dr. Daniel Bernardi and Michael Green; *The British Empire: A Historical Encyclopedia* (2018), edited by Dr. Mark Doyle; and *Music around the World: A Global Encyclopedia* (2020), edited by Drs. Andrew R. Martin and Matthew Mihalka. In 2015, Freeman released a country music radio single, "Sunlight and Shadows," garnering international airplay, and his gospel music has received national exposure through television, radio and commercial recordings. His gospel EP, *Blessing and Blessing*, featuring guest vocalists Babbie Mason, a Grammy-nominated artist, and Gospel Music Hall of Famer Calvin Newton, released in December 2018. An owner of Belgian draft horses since 1987, Freeman's horse interests expanded into the world of Thoroughbred racing and breeding with the purchase of shares in Authentic in 2020. Authentic soon after won the Haskell Stakes, the Kentucky Derby and Breeders' Cup Classic before retiring to stud at Spendthrift Farm, Lexington, Kentucky, USA.

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